

# *The American Record Guide*

**23rd  
YEAR OF  
PUBLICATION**

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and Byways***

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*Artur Rubinstein*

## OPERA SPOTLIGHT

**MASSENET:** *Manon*; Victoria de los Angeles (Manon), Henri Legay (Chevalier Des Grieux), Jean Borthayre (Count Des Grieux), Michel Dens (Lescaut), Rene Herent (de Morfontaine), Jean Vieulle (De Bretigny), Liliane Berton (Poussette), Raymonde Notti (Javotte), Marthe Serres (Rosette), Chorus and Orchestra of l'Opéra Comique, Paris, conducted by Pierre Monteux. RCA Victor set LM-6402, 4 discs, \$15.92.

▲LONDON'S *Manon* was a disappointment with its numerous cuts and use of a narrator (speaking, of course, in French) to tell us what takes place during the omitted portions. Considering the many excellences of that set, its presentation was most unfortunate for all concerned. The Entré set, made a quarter of a century ago, has its decided vocal attributes but reproductively it is unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, I can imagine many collectors retaining it for the stylistic elegance and impassioned singing of Rogatchewsky as Des Grieux. Neither de Luca (London set) nor Legay (present set) are vocally as blessed though both are pleasing singers giving traditionally romantic characterizations. In the Abbé Prevost's famous novel (1733) Des Grieux is the central character, but in the operas based on this story Manon becomes the central character. In the book, as Ernest Newman states, "it is always through des Grieux's eyes that we see her; and we feel more for him than her. But in an opera next to nothing of all this psychological involution can be suggested. The only thing to be done with Manon is make her what Massenet and his librettists have done—a charming piece of feminine frailty, lovable and pitiable both for the Chevalier's sake and her own."

And so, in the opera house, Manon is the chief attraction—the character by which the success of a performance generally is judged. Of the three Manons to date in operatic sets, de los Angeles vocally is the most ingratiating. Those "elements of female sensibility in music", for which Massenet had a unique gift, as Newman has pointed out, are sweetly set forth by this singer with her classical vocal artistry. The frailty of Manon is surprisingly suggested and even the intensity of her passion—notably in her pleading with Des Grieux in the St. Sulpice scene in Act 3. Micheau and Ferald have their moments, as in the Cours-la-Reine scene, for example, where they are more brilliant in their upper registers, but elsewhere de los Angeles wins our approval. If Michel Dens Lescaut is not as outstanding as Bourdin's, he is at least

competent. Indeed, the rest of the cast sustain the competence of its source—the Paris Opéra-Comique—since all undoubtedly have sung in this opera more than any other similarly proficient cast that elsewhere could be assembled in an opera house.

It remains to speak of Monteux's conducting, which is hardly a surprise to one who long has admired his sensibility in music of lyrical charm. He does not make the music too incisive but wisely permits its charm of sentiment to prevail. He hurries nothing and thus advantageously serves the singers at all times.

This is a complete *Manon*, with the spoken recitative, so important to understanding of the dramatic denouement of each scene. The reproduction of this set is gratifyingly realistic with its fine balance between singers and orchestra. —P.H.R.

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**PROKOFIEV:** *The Love for Three Oranges*, Op. 33 (Opera in 4 Acts); Latko Koroshetz (King of Clubs), Yanez Lipushchek (Prince), Vanda Guerlovich (Fata Morgana), Drago Chuden (Truffaldino), Bogdana Stritar (Clarissa), Danilo Merlak (Leandre), Sonia Khochevar (Ninette), Elza Karlovatz (Smeraldine), Friderik Lupsha (Kreonta), Zdravko Kovach (Tchelio), others, Orchestra and Chorus of the Slovenian National Opera, Ljubljana, conducted by Bogo Leskovich. Epic 4SC-6013, 2 discs, \$9.96.

▲LAST summer the Slovenian National Opera Company of Ljubljana, a town of some hundred thousand inhabitants in Yugoslavia, went to the Holland Festival and gave some performances of Prokofiev's seldom-performed opera *The Love for Three Oranges*. This score, based on Carlo Gozzi's play of the same title, was performed a few years ago with some success by the New York City Opera Company. It is a melodious work, with plenty of opportunities for the vocalists to display their talents. There can only be praise for the present performance, recorded by Philips last summer on the occasion of the visit of the company to Holland. The tenor, Yanez Lipushchek, has a clear, ringing voice that is worthy of notice. Latko Koroshetz, Zdravko Kovach and Friderik Lupsha are in the great tradition of Russian basses. The others in the large cast are excellent. On the whole this company seems to have even better voices than the Belgrade National Opera which was heard in the recent recordings of *Prince Igor* and *Khovanchina*.

Although we are familiar with the sections Prokofiev drew from the opera to make up the *Suite*, Op. 33a, the score abounds with many other delightful passages. The visual aspect is missing, but nevertheless there is much to enjoy in this capital performance. The score is sung in Russian. Text and translation are missing, but a detailed synopsis is

included. The performance, incidentally, is complete and follows the vocal score exactly. The notes imply that it is a version different from that of the New York City Opera Company. The latter was probably different from the original and not the other way around.

The recorded sound is excellent in every way with splendid balance between the voices and the orchestra. —R.R.

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**PUCCINI:** *La Bohème* (Opera in 4 Acts); Victoria de los Angeles (Mimi), Jussi Bjoerling (Rodolfo), Robert Merrill (Marcello), Lucine Amara (Musetta), Giorgio Tozzi (Colline), John Reardon (Schaunard), Fernando Corena (Benoit & Alcindoro), Chorus and RCA Victor Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham. RCA Victor LM-6042, 2 discs, \$7.98.

▲THE RCA Victor catalogue has contained the marvelous Toscanini performance of *La Bohème* for some years now. The sound was never of the highest quality, although the performance more than makes up for it. Last spring, a strong cast was assembled in New York City under the leadership of Sir Thomas Beecham for a new recording under ideal studio conditions. The results may be heard with satisfaction in this new release. If the set does not have the fire and passion of the earlier version it does have a tenderness and warmth that is most touching. The principals are in excellent voice, with Victoria de los Angeles giving one of her most moving portrayals to date. Jussi Bjoerling has been associated with the role since his début with the Metropolitan almost 20 years ago, so for his participation this set will be treasured by a large group of collectors. The others in the cast are of uniform excellence, especially Lucine Amara, who sings rather than shrieks the role of Musetta. Sir Thomas Beecham leads the RCA Victor Symphony in a performance that is marked by many gorgeous moments. It is paced somewhat more leisurely than most recordings, but the overall effect is not unpleasant. His pacing of the last act, however, is slower than in his previous recording which may displease some listeners. The recorded sound is splendid and the balance between voices and orchestra is completely satisfactory. —R.R.

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**STRAUSS, Richard:** *Elektra*—Three Scenes; *Salome*—Final Scene; *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*—Suite; Inge Borkh & Frances Yeend (sopranos), Paul Schoeffler (baritone) and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by Fritz Reiner. RCA Victor LM-6047, 2 discs, \$7.98.

▲INGE BORKH gives thrilling performances of three scenes from Strauss' *Elektra* and also the Final Scene from *Salome* with incomparable support from  
(Continued on page 20)

# Music In Highways and Byways

or

## Some Reflections on Reproduced Music

By Neville D'Esterre

IN THE EARLY DAYS of this publication, the hospitality of its pages was given to some observations of mine on "What Mechanical Music Has Effaced". In that article—written, I fear, in a flippant vein—a picture was drawn of the typical "musical family" of the turn of the century; and thankfulness was registered by the writer that broadcasting and the gramophone, between them, had swept that domestic and artistic monstrosity out of existence. The point was emphasized that the families described, although their ordinary recreation consisted in performing music, both vocally and instrumentally, were not musical at all, but were truly unmusical, for they could never find gratification in performing music to themselves. Theirs was, of course, a kind of musical exhibitionism.

In those days we had to endure such "musical" people, for there was no avoiding them. We had to render to them the courtesy of feigned attention, even as we have to render it today to their inextinguishable compeers, the conversational bores. They offered us hospitality, and when we, in our innocence of their true intentions, accepted it, they entertained us by banging and bellowing their way through all that pseudo-Handel and pastiche Gounod stuff (those sentimental drawing-room ballads that came in cycles and in single-copy droves) or, even worse, that bogus medieval minstrelsy which the hack composers of the 19th century threw off in such profusion.

There is no doubt that mechanical music has removed these people from the scene by providing, not them, but the rest of us with a counter attraction. From their domestic scene, yes; but not, I fear, from sight and sound. As might have been expected, those who could no longer find a docile audience for their own bellowing, bleating and banging manifestations were soon known to be inflicting upon a new army of martyrs their trashy selections in reproduced music.

The innocent guest, received with open arms in the new tenements and bungalows of the inter-war period, would find his

evening planned for him by a host, in whom the urge to foster upon all strangers and friends his own ideas of musical entertainment was still most horribly alive. Too often these hospitable beings would feed their primitive gramophones with disc after disc, inviting their unhappy guests (musical or otherwise) to feast their senses with those hideous shriekings and howlings which passed in such places for the art of "Melber and Kerewzow."

Who among us has not heard a blaring gramophone from some open window, or even under the greenwood tree, inviting the wrath of heaven with its distortion of good music and great artistry, or committing a common breach of the peace with its promulgation of rubbish? And when the wireless, or radio, came into existence, it too became the vehicle of another variety of artistic exhibitionism engendered by a similar inferiority complex. Inasmuch as the would-be performer could not find an audience for his own impertinent efforts, and was fast forgetting the art of making them, he found himself driven to manipulate mechanical music to his own nefarious ends. And, so the broadcast artists of the day became *his* voice, *his* vehicle of self advertisement.

In my former article I remarked that, in my opinion, mechanical music has not "deflected one true musician from the pursuit of the science and the art of music". Even the proposition that, by tending to centralize the performance of music, it has thrown many professional instrumentalists out of work (which seemed likely 20 years ago) will hardly endure serious scrutiny at the present day. The unions have seen to that.

The person to be discouraged from musical activities by mechanical music is neither the professional (whose art, indeed, it has served to advertise), nor yet the competent amateur, but the incompetent amateur, who did so much in former times to reduce the art of music to the level of round games and family chatter.

All this is not to say that the prospect opened by these developments is wholly a

pleasing one. Music, as its functions in its highest flights goes beyond words of any form of art. All music which we call great—and the term cannot be bettered—is the very pattern of exactitude of design, of logical sequence in cause and effect.

The late Sir W. H. Hadow, writing about Beethoven as a master of form, has said: "If this were all, it would rank him with the immortals, for such supremacy of musical structure is not a matter of ingenuity, but of organic life and growth. Yet even this is only the bodily frame through which courses a flow of such passion and tenderness as the world has never equalled."

There is, indeed, a far deeper cultural significance, not merely latent but alive in this art of music, than is dreamed of by the majority of those who recognize the social value of the humanities in other respects. Possibly its noblest expressions have been made already; but it is certain that few have attempted to explore their meanings, or to free their minds of the popular notion that all music, the great and the trivial alike, serves no other purpose than that of amusing us in our idle moments. Tolstoi gave that notion his blessing in his old age. In his prime he would have repudiated it with scorn.

The gramophone, or phonograph—as you will—has helped some of us to achieve what might be termed, from the explorer's point of view, an early landfall of the truth. It might have done a great deal more for all of us, if only it had been placed in the hands of guiding educationists with true discernment in these things, instead of big business. It is undeniable, at all events, that the gramophone has given us a new intimacy with the supreme masterpieces, which we could never have gained in any other way; and, moreover, that is always our servant, never our master. Its audibility or silence is subject to our will.

With broadcast music it is otherwise. To switch on the radio is to receive whatever music the broadcasting authorities choose to give us. And, further, the universality of receiving sets (described

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by J. A. Fox-Strangways as the greatest triumph of matter over mind of which history has record) places those of us who dwell in cities, or even small country townships, at the mercy of our neighbors; whose views and tastes are too often sadly antagonistic to our own. In that latest adjunct to reproduced sound, the television set, the pattern will be repeated and neighbors will be blasted with sounds, musical or otherwise, which will be the more irritating since without sight in this case can have less than half a meaning.

Let me clarify my meaning by relating an experience of a few years back. I was in a certain house at one o'clock of an afternoon, where there was a radio in the dining room. As the mid-day meal was about to be served, the radio was switched on. Everybody, however, was talking and moving about, and the conditions were about as unfavorable for the reception of music as could be imagined. I was able to hear the announcer say that certain people (whose names I did not catch) were about to perform the *C minor Quartet* of Brahms, a work which is about as remote from grill-room music, as any music could possibly be. For the next 25 minutes I caught snatches of the music through the din. Somebody remarked that having the radio in the dining-room made that place at meal-times "quite like a restaurant"; adding that music was "such a stimulus to eating and talking." Is this not as if one should say that prayer is a stimulus to dancing or to gymnastic exercises?

This sort of thing makes me conscious of the crudity of what we call our civilization. Not long before that serving up of Brahms as a luncheon side-dish, I had heard a public performance of Beethoven's *Eroica* from a Rolls-Royce radio set in a garage. There was the usual hubbub in the place, and one of the chauffeurs began to whistle a popular waltz while the *Marcia funebre* was being played. There is about as much rightness in such a conjunction as this as there would be if a vacuum cleaner was permitted to be used in Covent Garden or the Metropolitan Opera House during a performance of *The Magic Flute*.

#### Windy Talk

There has been a lot of windy talk about the advantages of broadcasting as a means of disseminating good music among the uncultured millions. Perhaps some of these broadcasts have brought home to a small proportion of those uncultured millions the enduring qualities and worthiness of good music; but as nothing has been done to urge its dissociation from extraneous pursuits and irrelevant conversation, I feel far from confident about it. Good music turned on at random in this way, to mingle its sounds with all the ordinary commotion of work and play, is, and must be, wasted upon those whom it reaches. Robert

Burns may have excogitated great thoughts in the trail of the plough; but I doubt that he ever formulated any in the cattle market.

I am sure that the appreciation, to say nothing of enjoyment, of fine music could be more widespread than it is. I believe the gift of appreciation to be latent in many who seem to be without it. Yet I believe also that there is no other sure way of developing that gift than the way in which it has been developed by most of those who exhibit it; and that is the frequent hearing of such music in the places where it is performed. Broadcasting, in my opinion, will have little effect in developing the fullest love and understanding of great music. Television, I fear, while fixing one's attention on the physical attitudes and antics of performers, might even have a retarding effect; but that is another story. Nor can the gramophone by itself accomplish this end. This purveyor of music begins to be valuable only when experience has taught the listener the art of intelligent reception—the art, that is to say, of assimilating this wordless language, even as it flows. Those who can read or even follow scores have a rare adjunct to assist them in fullest assimilation.

The place where that art is most readily acquired is the place where the many gather together for the single purpose of hearing music, and where they are brought face to face with the trained executants of the art. Here the wise individual sits at peace, that he may gather music into his own being, providing there are, of course, around him those, and only those, who desire and whose motive are the same as his.

#### In the Home

Another place where that art can be most happily acquired is in the home where, in privacy undisturbed by alien members of the family or neighbors, one can play fine recordings of the *Eroica*, the *C minor Quartet* of Brahms, *The Magic Flute*, Debussy's *La Mer* or Schubert's *Lieder* for the uplift of one's own spirit when the mood is urgent. Can one share such experiences with a member of the family or with a friend, observing the same silence that is observed in the concert hall? The editor has posed this question. It is a moot query. For a sudden change of expression on a friend's face, a faint but audible sigh, might disturb that wishfully believed mood of *en rapport*, of complete listening harmony, to make one inwardly uneasy and fearful that one's companion is not truly congenial to the enjoyment of the music being heard.

We are in deep waters when we think of such things. Much of the music that reaches us means little; much means a great deal. Interpretation may clarify the meaning, or may obscure it. To our neighbor in the concert hall or our com-

panion in the home, the music being played may mean much or little, while to us it may mean the opposite. Interpretative art is not always similarly appreciated. We may well ask: what is that meaning? The answer is not to be found in words, but must be sought in the depths of one's own nature. The philosophy of our inarticulate language still has to be discovered. It is my hope that nobody will discover it in my time.

## OPERA SPOTLIGHT

(Continued from page 18)

Fritz Reiner and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. The *Elektra* scenes include (beginning *Allein! Weh, ganz allein!*), the Finale (beginning *Elektra! Schwester! komm mit uns!*) in which Miss Borkh is joined by Frances Yeend and the chorus of the Lyric Theatre in Chicago, and the great Recognition Scene (*Was willst du, fremder Mensch*) with Paul Schoeffler singing the role of Orestes. It is regrettable that the entire opera was not recorded, as the soloists are in excellent voice and have received splendid support from the recording engineers. Fritz Reiner's incandescent performance of the score has long been admired.

The Final Scene from *Salome* is vividly set forth by Miss Borkh. The brief lines of Herod and Herodiade are omitted, but they would have added little to the overall effect. There are many details in the orchestral part that stand out more vividly than in Reiner's earlier version of the scene with Ljuba Welitsch.

The final side of the set is devoted to one of Reiner's specialties, the *Suite from Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. Here again the sound is immeasurably superior to the earlier version with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. This side can be used most effectively for demonstrating hi-fi equipment, with the many brilliant orchestral effects.

An earlier recording of music from *Elektra*, conducted by Beecham, beginning with the Recognition Scene and continuing to the end of the opera, had some thrilling moments, but the sound of this version is superior. The transfer from 78 rpm of Beecham's version is not available at present.

—R.R.

**VERDI: *La Traviata***; Rosanna Carteri (Violetta Valery), Cesare Valletti (Alfredo Geront), Leonard Warren (Giorgio Germont), Lidia Marimpietri (Flora Bervoix), Glauco Scarlini (Gastone), Arturo La Porta (Baron Douphol), Leonardo Monreale (Marquis d'Obigny), Dario Caselli (Dr. Grenvil), Rina A. Maccagnani (Annina), Rome Opera House Orchestra and Chorus conducted by Pierre Monteux. RCA Victor set LM-6040, 3 discs, \$11.94.

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**THE SAME:** Antonietta Stella (Violetta), Giuseppe di Stefano (Alfredo), Tito Gobbi (Germont), Elivira Galassi (Flora), Giuseppe Zampieri (Gastone), William Dickie (Baron), Nicola Zaccaria (Marquis), Silvio Maionica (Doctor), Luisa Mandelli (Annina), La Scala Orchestra and Chorus conducted by Tullio Serafin. Angel set 3545, 2 discs, \$11.96.

▲WITH its latest complete *La Traviata*, RCA Victor presents the purchaser with a copy of *Camille* by the younger Dumas, from which the drama and the opera were taken. The novel was published in Paris 108 years ago. Four years later, 1852, the play appeared, and a year later came Verdi's opera. If one admires the opera, one should read the story of Marguerite Gautier as Dumas told it. "The Lady of the Camelias" was a real person, at least to Dumas, but not quite the noble and tragic character that Verdi and his librettist made of her. Imagination knows no license; a poet or novelist can make great drama out of some simple facts, and a musician can add the magic touch for, as George Marek says, "Music is stranger than fiction." Perhaps the buyer will pass up reading the novel at first to hear the music and the singing from this wonderful recording. But let the buyer at least open the pages of that book and glance within. If he reads the first few lines of the preface by Mr. Marek, I believe that the rest will follow quite naturally to his interest and perhaps enlightenment.

The inclusion of an attractively bound and printed edition of *Camille* (in English of course) is not necessarily a reason for acquiring this latest performance of *Traviata*. In the long-run, the enjoyment of the opera recording will be the motive for acquisition of this or any other set. There is much artistically to admire in both the Victor and the Angel sets. Of the two the more nearly ideal cast would seem to be Victor's and certainly the conducting of Monteux and the splendidly balanced recording, in which the orchestra does not give way to the singers, are assets not evidenced previously in *Traviata* sets. Rosanna Carteri has a firmer grasp on the role of Violetta than did any of her predecessors except Licia Albanese, who was below her best in the streamlined conducting of Maestro Toscanini. Carteri is an attractive vocalist though there is sometimes too much vibrancy in her upper tones, but she maintains a fine line. She reminds one of Lucrezia Bori at times, both vocally and temperamentally. Angel's Antonietta Stella is a gifted singer with more natural beauty of tone, but she seems less mature in her artistry. Sometimes her singing is a bit tremulous. Cesare Valletti and Giuseppe di Stefano are praiseworthy as Alfredo, the former for his lyrical graciousness and the latter for his ardor. Of the two elder Germonts,

Warren has the more imposing vocal attributes while Gobbi is the better singing actor. The conducting of Tullio Serafin in the Angel set seems almost tepid in comparison with Monteux's and the reproduction while good, is lacking in the type of realism that the Victor set has a realistic balance between voices and orchestra. One feels the "mike" presence of the singers when they take over in the Angel set. Considered all in all, the Angel set is definitely a notch or two above all others except this Victor release and the London one featuring Renata Tebaldi. If Tebaldi had an Alfredo or a Germont comparable to those in the Victor or Angel sets, the London performance would be unchallenged. —P.H.R.

## ARTUR RUBINSTEIN PLAYS FOUR CONCERTOS

▼  
**GRIEG:** *Concerto in A minor, Op. 16;*  
**LISZT:** *Concerto No. 1 in E flat;*  
Artur Rubinstein with the RCA Victor Symphony Orchestra conducted by Alfred Wallenstein; **RACHMANINOV:** *Concerto No. 2 in C minor, Op. 18* and *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Op. 43;* Artur Rubinstein with Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by Fritz Reiner. RCA Victor LM-6039, 2 discs, \$7.96.

▲THIS set might be called "Rubinstein at Seventy". For the noted pianist celebrated his seventieth birthday on January 28th, or was it in February that he celebrated the occasion when he undertook a series of five concerts in which he played seventeen different concertos? The reasons for these special concerts and a great deal more on this extraordinary musician was told as long ago as February 5 by Howard Taubman in an article published on that date in *The New York Times Magazine*, reprinted with this set. Rubinstein is quoted in it as saying that, despite the fact he had played the seventeen concertos over a period of years, he had never been quite satisfied with his performances. Thus, like the late Artur Schnabel, he evidently reassesses his performances constantly, evaluating their emotional and intellectual balance. Considering the recent birthday and that notable series of concertos, RCA Victor hardly could have failed to celebrate in some way those occasions. Since Rubinstein was not too well served in his previous performances of two concertos—the Liszt and Rachmaninov—and present-day reproductive advancements realize better artistic representation, there was wisdom in RCA Victor's arrangement for these

recordings in which the tone of Rubinstein's piano is reproduced from bass to treble more realistically than ever before. Indeed, apart from the artistry (which cannot be by-passed even in favor of sound), the tonal quality of the piano in these recordings is such an asset within itself that sound, *per se*, can hardly fail to engage the listener's interest even if he owns other fine performances (of which there are several) of these various works.

Rubinstein belongs, as Howard Taubman says, "to the grand line of pianists". The attributes that make a great virtuoso musician are his—strong emotional powers controlled by a rare artistic intellect and superb technique comprising a control second to none among us today. Even as art is ageless, some artists bely their age. Rubinstein in person or in music has the vitality of a younger man. An artist of such strong personality should always work with competent and cooperative conductors rather than dominant virtuoso or personality conductors. One suspects that Rubinstein has the knowledge and ability to control his own performance but wisely prefers to give his all at the piano rather than to divide his attention.

Of the two previous performances of the Grieg concerto that Rubinstein made, the one on 78 discs with Ormandy was preferable to the later one with Dorati. Here, with the knowingly cooperative Alfred Wallenstein, he demonstrates more tellingly his wondrous facility and poetic eminence. In the Liszt, it is again the concordant spirit of Wallenstein that makes this performance preferable to the earlier one which was once rightfully described as a contest between conductor and pianist. Here, the show rightfully belongs to Rubinstein, who plays with rare virtuosity but without pomposity.

The two Rachmaninov works are splendidly played by Rubinstein and Reiner, though in the concerto (especially the slow movement) one senses a hint of emotional variance between pianist and conductor. Rubinstein is more reserved in his feeling for poetic sentiment while Reiner seems almost too ripely romantic in his province. Maybe the pianist would disagree with me, but I also feel in the *Rhapsody* that he and Süsskind in the earlier version (LM-1724 or LM-26) were more *en rapport* than he and Reiner. Such listening reactions being largely subjective, this is not meant to imply derogatory criticisms of either of these newer performances, which are so superbly played and reproduced.

(For comparison—hear Lipatti and Novae in the Grieg, Farnardi and Arrau in the Liszt, and Curzon and Anda in the Rachmaninov concerto. The only other performance of the *Rhapsody* worth serious consideration, in my estimation, is the one by the composer dating from 1935.) —P.H.R.

# Notes and Reviews

**T**HERE IS IN SOULS a sympathy with sounds, and as the mind is pitched the ear is pleased with melting airs or martial, brisk or grave; some chord in unison with what we hear is touched within us, and the heart replies.

—William Cowper

**BACH:** *Concerto No. 2 in E; Double Concerto in D minor; Sarabande from Partita No. 1 (i. e., Unaccompanied Sonata No. 2);* Leonid Kogan and Elisabeth Gilels (violins, the latter in the Double Concerto) with the Philharmonia String Orchestra conducted by Otto Ackermann. Angel 35343, \$4.98 or \$3.48.

▲**ALTOGETHER**, a welcome but not unmixed blessing. The performance of the *E major* is worth the price of the disc; no other version equals it for propriety or pure loveliness. Would that the other contents were as worthwhile. The *Double Concerto* runs its course in rather headlong fashion, with some loss of the requisite style in consequence. The sound is quite good throughout. —J.L.

**BACH:** Organ Works, Vol. II—*Variations on "Sei gegruesst"; Prelude and Fugue in C; Passacaglia in C minor;* Anton Heiller (organ). Epic LC-3261, \$3.98.

▲**NEXT** to Walcha, I like best Heiller in these works. He has the fingers and very nearly the profound insight to bring these works to their full majesty. Indeed, his virtuosity is cleaner than Walcha's in the big passages, if somewhat less compelling elsewhere. And the recorded sound is quite impressive. Considering the price differential, Heiller would be preferable to either Walcha or Weinrich in these particular works, but the various Bach organ music projects are anything but obliging in the matter of couplings. —J.L.

**BACH:** *The Well-Tempered Clavier* (Complete); Joerg Demus (piano). Westminster set WN-5501, 5 discs with miniature scores, \$26.40.

▲**IN** July of 1955, Westminster brought out Joerg Demus' performance of Vol. I of *The Well-Tempered Clavier*. At that time our reviewer, C. J. Luten, said: "There can be no doubt that this is the best solo playing Demus has offered us up to now. One feels greater tonal control, rhythmic steadiness, and a more careful modeling of phrase than he has previously afforded his listeners. I do not mean to imply that Rosalyn Tureck could not teach Demus

more than a trick or two about playing the *Well-Tempered Clavier*; she could. But what is important is that one can listen to Bach's music seldom being disturbed by musical or stylistic distortions." Now that we have the completion of Demus' performance of this great work, there seems little need to add to or take away from Mr. Luten's critical comments on Vol. I, for it also summarizes Vol. II. One also shares the opinion of our colleague, Harold Schonberg, who contends that Demus has neither the authoritative style nor the ease of rendition of Rosalyn Tureck, whose association and study of this music is of much longer duration. Perhaps we are too familiar with Miss Tureck's performance to appreciate the stylistic aim of Demus' art, which seems to retain a romantic touch reminiscent of days gone by. Westminster's recording is good but not outstanding in this set. Useful miniature scores accompany the discs, along with excellent and valuable notes by Robert Sabin. When all is said and done, Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* is a work that fares best on the harpsichord rather than on the piano, and on records—whether performed on harpsichord or piano—no one has given us a more technically brilliant and imaginative rendition of this opus than Wanda Landowska's. —J.N.

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**BEETHOVEN:** *Concerto No. 5 in E flat, Op. 73 ("Emperor");* Robert Casadesus (piano) with the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York, conducted by Dimitri Mitropoulos. Columbia ML-5100, \$3.98.

▲**THE** combination of Casadesus and Mitropoulos should suggest that this is not merely "another" *Emperor*. The record was made this year during the Philharmonic's visit to Paris, the morning after a brilliant concert performance of the same work. Both conductor and pianist appear to have carried the enthusiasm of the concert performance with them to the recording studio, for this *Emperor* is alive with energy. Nor is the vigor abated when, in the quieter sections of the first two movements, M. Casadesus displays the flawless delicacy that is the distinctive quality of his playing. There are one or two rough spots in the ensemble, if one listens for them, and perhaps the pace of the last movement will seem slow to some listeners. Would it, incidentally, be outrageous to observe that this *Rondo* is not among the richest of Beethoven's concerto movements? The fine recorded sound of both piano and orchestra ranks this *Emperor* among the best of the many available versions. —E.Z.

**BEETHOVEN:** *Overtures—Leonore Nos. 1, 2, and 3, Fidelio, and Coriolan;* Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Charles Munch. RCA Victor LM-2015, \$3.98.

▲**RATHER** quixotic interpretations, and I am afraid they do not measure up to competitive versions despite the vast expenditure of energies that is manifest. Munch equates drama and melodrama. The latter is contraindicated as regards Beethoven in general and the *Fidelio* overtures in particular, along with the *Coriolan*. But those who do not take umbrage at Munch's contrary view will save a bit of money, the *Coriolan* being a bonus they will find in no other such grouping. The sound is excellent, although the Bostonians have sounded better lately. —J.L.

**BEETHOVEN:** *Sonata in E flat, Op. 12, No. 3;* **BRAHMS:** *Sonata in D minor, Op. 108;* David Oistrakh (violin) and Vladimir Yampolsky (piano). Angel 35331, \$4.98 or \$3.48.

▲**ONE** listens to these performances admiring the suavity and control of Oistrakh's violin playing and the musical prudence of Yampolsky's piano accompaniments. The sounds are warm and gracious, but one feels that something is missing. The *E flat Sonata* of Beethoven fares best. The Brahms is disappointing after Stern's performance. This work demands a bigness of style and more temperamental response. These same



flat, Jesus sym- bria

players were more fiery in an earlier version which was badly recorded. Here the reproduction is intimate but quite lifelike. —P.H.R.

**BEETHOVEN:** *Sonata No. 15 in D, Op. 28* ("Pastorale"); *Sonata No. 17 in D minor, Op. 31, No. 2* ("Tempest"); Paul Badura-Skoda (piano). Westminster XWN-18210, \$3.98.

▲BADURA-Skoda's scrupulous playing is better suited to the "Pastorale" than to the "Tempest". The former he plays beautifully, taking the first two movements at a very leisurely pace, and bringing a fine crispness to the delightful Scherzo. The first movement of the *D minor* is, however, too slowly and carefully played to be properly tempestuous, and the entire sonata seems to lack excitement in this performance. The *D major* should have been given top billing on this well-sounding disc. —E.Z.

**BEETHOVEN:** *Sonatas No. 30 in E, Op. 109, and No. 31 in A flat, Op. 110*; Ernst Levy (piano). Unicorn UNLP-1033, \$3.98.

▲THERE are fine qualities in Levy's playing—among them a touch that never annoys the ear—but in general these performances are unsatisfactory. The first movement of the *Op. 109* is unusually slow and heavy, the second movement lacks the maximum energy it demands, and certain tempi in the Theme and Variations are so slow that they are no longer meditative, but soporific. *Op. 110* fares better, but even there Levy treats rhythms and dynamics with a freedom unjustified by the effect. The difficult fugue does not have the sweep and drive it acquires in better performances. The disc, which is interesting technically, was recorded in the Kresge Auditorium at M. I. T.; I find the sound a bit over-resonant. —E.Z.

**BEETHOVEN:** *Symphony No. 3 in E flat* ("Eroica"); Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Otto Klemperer. Angel 35328, \$4.98 or \$3.48.

▲KLEMPERER has given us many fine performances and at least as many disappointing ones. Here he gives us an *Eroica* so very, very fine that the listener hardly can credit his ears. I have lived with some dozen LP versions, and of these I kept only the Toscanini and Leinsdorf. I will continue to keep them, I think, always. But Klemperer's, in addition to being far more effectively recorded than either, is on short acquaintance the most compelling of all. Not that it overwhelms; in the usual sense it does anything but. Klemperer doesn't play architect. He simply builds the structure in accordance with Beethoven's blueprint. He does so with such unobtrusive efficiency that one

is not aware of the tremendous grandeur of the edifice until, suddenly, one finds himself *inside* it, surrounded by it. My metaphors are getting out of hand and the listener is entitled to more specific information, but I can add only that the grandest aspect of Klemperer's achievement is his utter reliance on the efficacy of the composer's indications, which are nowhere abetted by any massive sounds alien to the orchestra of Beethoven's day. A noble *Eroica* indeed. —J.L.

**BEETHOVEN:** *Symphony No. 7 in A, Op. 92*; *Fidelio Overture, Op. 72-b*; Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by Fritz Reiner. RCA Victor LM-1991, \$3.98.

▲RCA VICTOR has adorned this elaborate album with a fold-out of Botticelli's "La Primavera". On the jacket back RCA's own George R. Marek attempts to draw an esthetic parallel between the painting and the music. If the Botticelli work were akin to anything of Beethoven's, it would seem to me to be closest to the *Pastoral* symphony. But the reproduction is a beauty and so is the performance inside. Reiner's warm and detailed account rates an A-plus. (But so does Paray's.) Victor has provided beautiful sound. The *Fidelio Overture* maintains the same level of excellence. —A.K.

**BLISS:** *A Colour Symphony; Introduction and Allegro*; The London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Arthur Bliss. London LL-1402, \$3.98.

**BLISS:** *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra; Theme and Cadenza for Violin and Orchestra*; Campoli with the London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Arthur Bliss. London 11-1398, \$3.98.

▲BACK in the 1920s, there was considerable to do about color and tone. The writer in 1923 was introduced to a system of color and tone, called Marcotone, sponsored by the Birchard Publishing Co. and asked to assist in its instruction at the Birchard Music Conservatory in New York, where he was then teaching. Bliss arrived in this country that year and the writer met him at the home of a mutual friend, the late Henry S. Gerstle, where discussion of tone and color went on into the late hours one night. Bliss' *Colour Symphony* had been performed the previous year at the Three Choirs Festival in Gloucester, where it had met with mixed response. Bliss has revised this work in recent years, and we read in *The Gramophone* that the sub-titles relating to the different colors and their heraldic significance have been abandoned "so that the music could be listened to on its own terms." That is precisely what your reviewer did and it was not until after the performance was heard that he discovered the programmatic hocus-pocus given in

the notes. Judging the work as music, apart from its color significance in heraldry, it is a strong composition, rather over-rich in scoring but imaginatively contrived. It is dated in some ways. While it is strongly emotional, one realizes that Bliss at 30 had his emotions well under control. Its melodic content is in its favor; its color content is at odds with the esoteric teaching of Marcotone, for whose demise we shed no tears.

The *Introduction and Allegro*, written for Stokowski in 1923, is a solid work, more intellectual than emotional with thematic structure that suggests Stravinsky's influence. While the scoring is a bit thick at times, the development of this music from a single theme becomes a fascinating study to the listener.

The *Violin Concerto* is a recent work, dedicated to Campoli, who plays it graciously and resplendently. This is music of gratifyingly melodic lyricism, brilliantly written for the soloist, with none of the ceremonial splendor of the *Piano Concerto*. Yet, like the piano work, this one (and for that matter too, the *Colour Symphony* and its companion piece) derive from romanticism which is one of the reasons that Bliss' music is so listenable. The short work, for violin, at the end is worth knowing on its own (it is submerged by the concerto and should have been played first). Its program is given in the notes but at least one listener would be content to listen to this music without recourse to any program.

Sir Arthur Bliss is a truly persuasive spokesman for his own works since he achieves the desired discipline to make his musical exuberance most convincing. The recording of both discs is excellent though that of the *Violin Concerto* is overall better defined. —P.H.R.

**BRAHMS:** *Concerto in D, Op. 77*; Zino Francescatti (violin) and the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia ML-5114, \$3.98.

▲THERE are precious few artists at whose concerts one can confidently sit back and expect what is to ensue to be perfect—not only technically perfect, but in excellent taste as well. Such an artist is Francescatti, and this warm and glowing performance of the Brahms concerto confirms one's expectations. Musically, it has to my ears only one peer—the Milstein-Steinberg collaboration on Capitol. Ormandy and the superb Philadelphians provide all that could be desired in their accompaniment. The Columbia engineering is excellent, although not quite up to its unusually high standards with this orchestra. —A.K.

**BRAHMS:** *Concerto No. 2 in B flat, Op. 83*; Rudolf Serkin (piano) with the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia ML-5117, \$3.98.

▲ALONG with Backhaus, Rubinstein and Horowitz, Serkin gives one of the great performances of this concerto, and it now has been recorded with sound that adequately represents its quality. The massive sonority of the Philadelphia is properly "Brahmsian", and Serkin's unfailing rhythmic accuracy and vitality underscores the dramatic structure of the music. Only the slow movement, to these ears, falls short of completely satisfying; for it needs a piano tone that is at once richer and more serene. As it is, the lyrical sections seem prosaic, a charge that could never be made against the grandeur of the first two movements and the sparkle of the last. —E.Z.

●  
**BRAHMS:** *Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98*; Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Herbert von Karajan. Angel 35298, \$4.98 or \$3.48.

▲CERTAINLY this is beyond cavil in terms of sheer performance; the orchestra plays superbly from start to finish. Those who like their Brahms with *Gemuetlichkeit*, however, will be sadly disappointed until the finale comes along. Unaccountably, the first three movements are as granitic as can be. The irony of it is of course that the last movement is perhaps the hardest of all to humanize, so that Karajan is due credit for making it sing as beautifully as he does. A pity that the others are so unbending, or so, at least, they seemed to this listener. Fine sound. —J.L.

●  
**Canzoni Napoletane**—'Na sera 'e maggio; Chi se nne scorda cchiu'; Funiculi Funicula'; Passione; Te sto' aspettanno; Desiderio 'e sole; O' ciucciariello; Pianefforte 'e notte; Tito Schipa (tenor) and an orchestra conducted by Mino Campanino. Durium DLU-96020, \$2.98.

▲STUDENTS are commended to this recital for a lesson in style. Customers, unless they be of that generation entitled to remember more than is preserved here, are forewarned of faltering breath control and consequent defections of the sort that are unavoidable after middle life. Schipa's voice has not lost all of its beauty, but most of it, alas, is gone. His artistry remains intact, this notwithstanding, and it is as always something to admire. Fair recorded sound. Innocuous arrangements. —J.L.

●  
**COUPERIN:** *Trois Lecons de Ténèbres; Motet de Sainte Suzanne*; Pierrette Alarie, Basia Retchitzka (sopranos), Leopold Simoneau (tenor), Georges Abdoun (bass), Antoine Geoffroy-Dechaume (organ), Manuel Recassens (cello), L'Ensemble Vocal de Paris and L'Orchestre de Chambre Gerard Cartigny conducted by Ernest Bour. Ducretet-Thomson DTL-93077, \$4.98.

▲FRANCOIS COUPERIN'S *Trois Lecons de Ténèbres* are part of a series of nine

lessons written in 1714 to be sung in groups of three on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of Holy Week. The three here recorded are for Wednesday; the others are unknown. They may be in manuscript or they may be lost. The instrumentation is not specified in these works. The first two are for solo voice while the third is for two voices. Organ and cello provide the accompaniment. Those who are familiar with the elaborate arrangement of the Third Lesson available on two 78-rpm discs before the war, or even the two earlier versions on LP, will be quite surprised at the present performance. The two sopranos take the piece at about twice the tempo of earlier versions. The voices are typically French, rather penetrating and not particularly sensuous. The soloists are accurate enough, but there is certainly more to the music than these forces bring out. Texts and translations are conspicuously absent.

As a filler, we have a performance of the *Motet de Sainte Suzanne*, which was composed some time between 1698 and 1702. It is sung by Pierrette Alarie, her husband, Leopold Simoneau and the bass Georges Abdoun. The Paris Vocal Ensemble and the Cartigny Chamber Orchestra provide accompaniments. The soloists in this performance are generally better than those in the earlier version on Oiseau Lyre, and the sound is superior as well. —R.R.

●  
**DVORAK:** *Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 95* ("From the New World"); RIAS Symphony Orchestra, Berlin, conducted by Ferenc Fricsay. Decca DL-9845, \$3.98.

**SAME:** Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia ML-5115, \$3.98.

**SAME:** Symphony of the Air (conductorless). Available by contribution only (\$12 a year) from The Symphony Foundation of America, Inc., Room 1101, Carnegie Hall, New York 19, N. Y.

▲DESPITE frequent playings and almost as frequent misuse, this symphony remains one of the truly great works of the romantic period. Of the current releases, Fricsay turns in as beautifully vivid and colorful a performance as any I have ever heard. I found the sound in this Deutsche Grammophon issue a bit muddy, particularly in the bass. On the other hand, while the Columbia engineers have done a fantastic job for Ormandy and his Philadelphians, the performance, alas, lacks the bite and color that Fricsay brings to the score—a surprise, since the previous (and now antiquated) Ormandy effort with this symphony was near-perfect in my estimation. Judging from the coughs and other audience noises, the Symphony Of The Air "Presentation Album" is a recording of this work as played at the conductorless concert of October

27, 1954. I do not feel it fair to judge this issue on the same basis as the preceding two, therefore, except to note that the string tone seems a bit wiry, and that the balance (particularly between the strings and the brasses) is not all that it should be. If the performance is not a replica of Toscanini's it is at least a reasonable facimile. —A.K.

●  
**ELGAR:** *Sea Pictures*; Gladys Ripley (contralto) with orchestra conducted by George Weldon; *Overture—In the South*; London Symphony Orchestra conducted by George Weldon. Capitol P 18017, \$3.98.

▲THE authorities on Sir Edward Elgar all seem to agree that he was not fond of the solo voice, and that he took little interest in the writing of songs. But when it came to the *Sea Pictures*, these were something else. Elgar was a master of orchestration, and he also wrote colorful harmonies. I don't think it is quite fair to write off the vocal part as some critics do, for I note on the printed score that this cycle was "sung by Miss Clara Butt." Such a voice as hers could certainly have created excitement in the broad melodic lines of the last song, to say the least. Of course the five poems chosen by the composer are old-fashioned, and they must have been pretty thin even in their best days. The first of them, *Sea Slumber Song*, is by Hon. Roden Noel, the second, *In Haven*, by Lady Elgar; *Sabbath Morning at Sea* brings us Mrs. Browning in a weaker moment; *Where Corals Lie* is by Richard Garnett, and *The Swimmer* by A. Lindsay Gordon. A measure of Elgar's weakness in setting words is the way in which he throws away so romantic a line as "God surely loved us a little then" in *The Swimmer*. The late Miss Ripley did not have a voice to match Clara Butt; in fact hers was not a particularly telling tone. Though she rose easily to the top notes in the score, she did it rather gingerly and without giving the impression of reserve. This was somewhat less true in her earlier recording of the cycle made, also with Weldon, for HMV. Certainly the conductor could have done more subtle things with the softer songs, though he is good at the climaxes.

According to Percy Young, *In the South* is "a conducted tour of Italy." It is as bright and exuberant as the sunlight of that country, and if it exceeds its proper length it does so very pleasantly. Here Mr. Weldon seems altogether at home. —P.L.M.

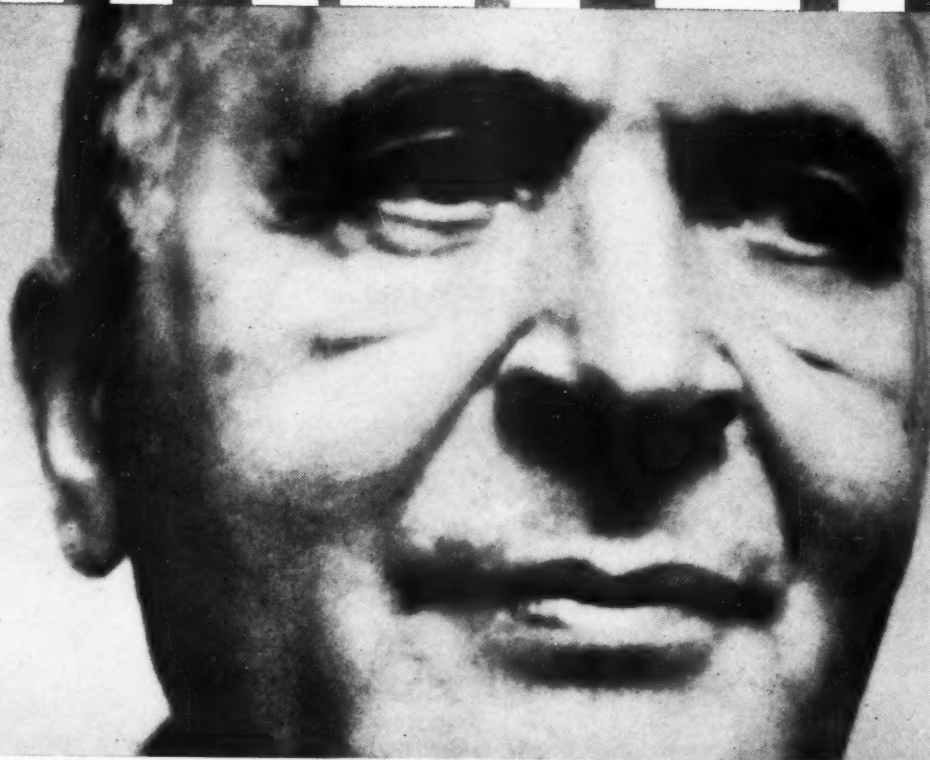
●  
**GIBBONS:** *Song 44; Veni Creator; First Preces; Psalm 145; Magnificat; Nunc dimittis (Short Service); Anthems: O God, Thou King of Glory; Almighty and Everlasting God; O Lord in Thy Wrath; Hosanna to the Son of David; O Lord Increase My Faith; O Clap your Hands and God is Gone up; Choir of King's*



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Chapel, Cambridge, conducted by Boris Ord; Hugh McLean (organ). Westminster XWN 18165, \$3.98.

▲THIS recording takes on a special kind of authenticity from being so much like a church performance. One does not have the impression that the program has been carefully selected and long rehearsed, but that these are works in the regular repertoire of the choir. Apparently the recording has been made in the church, and there is the consequent diffusion of sound, both of the choir and of the organ, and there is some fading in and out of the tone. The choir itself seems to be a typical English group, fairly well balanced between men and boys, though the counter-tenors are weak, especially in one solo lead. One wishes more spirit had gone into the singing, for the music itself is a sheer delight. Even the stirring *Hosanna to the Son of David* is here a little unconvincing. Only at the end of the program, in the double anthem *O Clap Your Hands and God is Gone up*, do we get an impression of enthusiasm. But this is the first full-scale recording of Gibbons' vocal music, and so it is an important release.—P.L.M.

■  
**HAYDN:** *Symphony No. 100 in G* ("Military"); **SCHUBERT:** *Symphony No. 5 in B flat*; respectively the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam and the Vienna Symphony Orchestra conducted by Carlo Zecchi. Epic LC-3258, \$3.98.

▲READERS of this journal may recall that Zecchi has fared badly whenever he appeared as conductor. After hearing this disc I returned to his earlier ones just to confirm that they were as poor as I had thought. They were. It is a pleasure, therefore, to report satisfaction with this latest pair of performances. The conductor's tempi are on the slow side, but not objectionably so and nowhere out of proportion. And there is real lilt in the Schubert. In fact, the only disturbing thing is the choice of couplings. One cannot imagine more disparate works within the 19th-century symphonic framework. Both are available in more recommendable issues—the Schubert on an economy-priced Bluebird (with the *Tragic*) and the Military on a premium-priced Westminster. —J.L.

■  
**HAYDN:** *Trio No. 30 in D*; Leonid Kogan (violin), Mstislav Rostropovich (cello), Emil Gilels (piano); **BRAHMS:** *Trio in E flat, Op. 40*; Leonid Kogan (violin), Yakov Shapiro (French Horn), Emil Gilels (piano). Westminster XWN-18181, \$3.98.

▲THESE Russians are splendid ensemble players. Their playing is well integrated and always in rapport. We hardly need to be told that the group in the Haydn have been playing together for several years. The horn player, Yakov Shapiro,

is rated as one of the finest players in the Soviet Union, and his assignment here proves his worth. This Brahms' trio has been recorded four times on LP and each performance has its particular merits. The quality of sound here is by far the best for mellowness of horn tone. Shapiro's tone appeals to me more than Koch's (Westminster) or Jones' (Columbia). The latter's is too thick; the former's not forward enough. As a performance, however, I think the earlier one by Koch, Barylli and Holetschek is easier to live with since the tempo of the opening *Andante* moves more freely and thereby keeps the horn from sounding as morose as it frequently does here and consistently does in the case of the Columbia ensemble. This is a cherishable work, yet it should not be played when one is tired or in the doldrums. The Haydn is bright and elative—music for everyday and any occasion except, of course, a funeral. It might do at a wake, however. The work really belongs to the pianist but the violin gets some share of the fun. —P.H.R.

■  
**HINDEMITH:** *Nobilissima Visione; Symphonic Metamorphosis on Themes of Weber*; Hamburg Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Joseph Keilberth. Telefunken LGX-66055, \$4.98.

▲HISTORY repeats itself. Remember the arrival of the Ormandy-Szell disc that couples the same pieces? The date was a long time ago, in the first spawn of LP, and superior performances of either piece since have become available. These polarities of the Hindemith art make a fine pair, just the same, and it is good to see them together once again. Let me say that I continue to prefer Klemperer's *Nobilissima Visione* and the composer's own *Symphonic Metamorphosis*. But those who would gravitate to this Telefunken issue need have no regrets. Keilberth's forces are not all silken in the more expressive pages of the St. Francis homage, but they respond valiantly to his express train tempi in the virtuosic Weber workout. And the sound, if not opulent, is quite equal to the massive climaxes.—J.L.

■  
**LISZT:** *Hungarian Rhapsodies—No. 1 in F minor (Piano No. 14) and No. 2 in C sharp minor (Orchestra No. 4)*; L'Orchestre Symphonique de la Radio-diffusion Nationale Belge conducted by Franz André with Marie-Jeanne Kreitz (piano). Telefunken TM-68027, \$2.98.

▲TRY not to be confused by the above listing, which is taken more or less *verbatim* from the record sleeve. To muddy the waters even further, either of these hybrids will be found to combine the familiar Doppler transcription with elements of the keyboard original. The culprit, an arranger identified only as Waldenmaier, has done no more violence to Liszt than the latter did to a few others in his time. In effect, these settings are

miniature rhapsodies for piano and orchestra. Composer: no one in particular. Like it or leave it, according to your tastes. The performances and the sound are satisfactory, if you happen to be interested in the contents. I don't know who might be, but you never can tell about these things. —J.L.

●  
**LISZT:** *Soirées de Vienne*; Edith Farnadi (piano). Westminster XWN-18218, \$3.98.

▲THE *Soirées de Vienne*, a collection of nine "waltz-caprices" based on Schubert waltzes, are probably the most tasteful job of transcription and paraphrase Liszt ever did. Except for a few cadenzas which may be too fussy an embroidery for the simply waltz tunes, Liszt did not over-elaborate the melodies, but used great restraint while giving them a pianistic setting. Even No. 9, a theme and variations, is not an occasion for complication and pyrotechnics. Miss Farnadi appears to recognize this, and properly plays with more attention to Schubert than to Liszt. The performance has grace and charm, and the sound is impeccable. —E.Z.

■  
**MANFREDINI:** *Twelve Concertos, Opus 3*; I Musici Virtuosi di Milano conducted by Dean Eckertsen. Vox set DL-242, 2 discs, \$12.95.

▲THIS set introduces us to a baroque composer who would seem to be relatively unknown except for the final concerto of this set, which is marked "Christmas Concerto". A previous recording of this work exists in the LP catalogue played by the American Arts Orchestra conducted by Otto Krueger. As far as I have been able to ascertain, this concerto (which has been infrequently performed since Arnold Schering's edition was published by C. F. Kahnt in 1904) remains the only work by which Francesco Maria Manfredini (c. 1665-1748) is known these days. This accounts for the fact that little or no information on him is available in musical dictionaries. Mr. Eckertsen, who would seem to be a musical sleuth, as well as a young conductor interested in music of the baroque period, has uncovered some information on this composer which places him in a favorable light in relation to his better remembered contemporaries. The little that is known of his career is not very eventful and, for that matter, neither is his music, which is not meant to imply that it is uninteresting—quite the contrary. If influences of Corelli and Vivaldi prevail in these concertos, this is not surprising. What is surprising is that Manfredini was sufficiently capricious enough to "pursue in his writings any course which his fancy suggested," as Mr. Eckertsen points out, and thus to conceal any indebtedness he may have had to others. These twelve works are specifically concertos rather than *concerti grossi*, yet solo instruments are used in

some of the works. The first four are massed concertos, the second four feature a solo violin, and the last four feature two violins. There is a certain dignity, nobility and simplicity in Manfredini's music, the healthy character of which should make for listening companionability. In my short acquaintance with these works I am agreeably disposed toward them and am looking forward to studying Mr. Eckertsen's lengthy notes and further familiarizing myself with the concertos. The performances are effectively devised with apparent relish and unmistakable enthusiasm. While Mr. Eckertsen avoids pedantry, however, he seems unaware that many of these works are subtler than he has realized. Excellent recording.

—P.H.R.

**MARCELLO:** 6 Sonatas for Viola da Gamba and Harpsichord, Op. 1; Janos Scholz (viola da gamba) and Egida Giordani Sartori (harpsichord). Epic LC-3260, \$3.98.

▲THIS seems to be the first complete version of Benedetto Marcello's Sonatas for Viola da gamba and Harpsichord. Earlier versions on 78 rpm usually consisted of single movements arranged for cello and piano, so the present record is most welcome. The two musicians will be remembered for their excellent versions of Bach's three Sonatas for Viola da gamba and Harpsichord about a year ago (Vox PL-9010). They are also members of the group known as *I Musici*. The present recording is well-balanced with an intimate chamber sound. The sonatas, in four contrasting movements (Largo, Allegro, Largo—or Grave, and Allegro) were revised and realized by the harpsichordist in the recording. The record is part of the series *Monumenta Italicae Musicae*, a survey of early Italian music recorded by Philips in Europe and released here on the Epic label.

—R.R.

**MEDTNER:** Sonata No. 3 in G minor, Op. 22; **SCARLATTI:** Sonatas in C, L. 104; in B minor, L. 449; in G, L. 487; in E, L. 23; in A, L. 345. Emil Gilels (piano). Westminster XWN-18180, \$3.98.

▲MEDTNER'S third sonata (composed in 1911) is a moody and passionate work in one movement, with frequent sudden crescendos and some intricate details, all richly colored with dark harmonies. It is above all pianistic, and for a pianist like Gilels it is a supreme vehicle for the display of both technique and temperament. So far this is the only recording on LP of any of the composer's larger works, and admirers of full and fine piano tone will want to hear more Medtner played by Gilels. The reverse side of the disc holds five Scarlatti sonatas, selected, it would seem, not only for their variety but for their familiarity as well. Gilels prefers a quick tempo in the A major, and plays the

B minor almost romantically. This disc is aptly titled "Gilels Plays": for the virtuosity and taste of the pianist are its most impressive qualities. Excellent recorded sound.

—E.Z.

**MENDELSSOHN:** Concerto in E minor, Op. 64; **WIENIAWSKI:** Concerto in D minor, Op. 22; Igor Oistrakh (violin) with the Gewandhaus Chamber Orchestra, Leipzig, conducted by Franz Konwitschny. Decca-9842, \$3.98.

▲EXPERT soloists, but the "Prince" is not yet in direct competition with the similarly surnamed "King David", nor with several other artists, either. The gifted scion excels in the Wieniawski, and his warm tone is rather more appropriate to this fine old *Schmaltz* than that of his only competitor—the latter's being Heifetz, however, precludes comparison on other points. There have been so many first-class performances of the Mendelssohn that one cannot indulge superlatives over young Oistrakh's. It is technically beyond reproach. This is not enough to put it in the company of his father's, or Milstein's, but surely it is enough to demonstrate the burgeoning of a potentially great interpreter. Konwitschny's accompaniments are admirable, the sound really superb.

—J.L.

**MOZART:** Concerto No. 7 in F, K. 242 for Three Pianos and Orchestra; Concerto No. 10 in E flat, K. 365 (for Two Pianos and Orchestra); Ilse von Alpenheim (in No. 7 only), Helen and Karl Ulrich Schnabel (in both) with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra conducted by Bernhard Paumgartner. Epic LC-3259, \$3.98.

▲THIS is the ideal coupling of these two concertos. The Duo Schnabel gives a spirited reading of the Concerto for Two Pianos and is joined by Ilse von Alpenheim in an equally attractive version of the Concerto for Three Pianos. The Vienna Symphony Orchestra under the rather lax direction of Bernhard Paumgartner provides the accompaniments. The sound is generally satisfactory with realistic reproduction of the pianists. Of the earlier recordings of K. 242, only Mozart's arrangement for two pianos and orchestra, performed by Paul Badura-Skoda and Reine Gianoli, merits serious comparison, for other versions are quite dated soundwise and are no longer available. The Westminster version of the E Flat Concerto is excellent but the newer version has superior sound. The Iturbi version, hard driven and harshly recorded, cannot be considered in the same class. Mozart's cadenzas are used in the E Flat Concerto, as they were in Mr. Schnabel's earlier recording with his father many years ago. Those in the F major Concerto are not identified, but sound Mozartean.

—R.R.

**MOZART:** Fantasy and Fugue in C, K. 394; Sonatas in A, K. 331, and A minor, K. 310; 9 Variations on a Minuet by Duport, K. 573; Fantasy and Sonata in C minor, K. 475 and K. 454; Rondos in F, K. 494, and D, K. 485; Paul Badura-Skoda (piano). Westminster XWN-2207 (2 discs).

▲THIS is a recording of the young pianist's Mozart Commemoration Recital, given at Town Hall on March 14th of this year. Two of the major works included—the A major Sonata and the C minor Fantasy and Sonata—have also been studio-recorded for Westminster by Badura-Skoda, on both modern piano (WL-5317) and Mozart piano (WN and SWN-18028), so a good deal of the interest of this disc depends on the fact that it is the recording of an actual recital. Apart from applause, however, no audience noises intrude, and the sound is first-rate. There is no doubt that the pianist displays a maturity beyond his youth, and a control that allows him to do exactly what he has planned to do when he plays; these performances would come closer to the ideal if more lyricism and spontaneity accompanied the obvious care and accuracy. But the scarcity on discs of ideal performances of works like the great A minor, K. 310, is an indication of their

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difficulty, and Badura-Skoda may well be the man eventually to come up with a completely satisfying interpretation.

—E.Z.

**NICOLAI:** *The Merry Wives of Windsor—Excerpts*; Maria Stader (Frau Fluth), Margarete Klose (Frau Reich), Anny Schlemm (Anna Reich), Kim Borg (Falstaff), Eberhard Waechter (Herr Reich), Walther Ludwig (Fenton), Chorus and Orchestra of the Bavarian Radio, Munich Philharmonic and the Württemberg State Orchestra conducted by Ferdinand Leitner. Decca DL-9839, \$3.98.

▲THE EXCERPTS included on this record are: *Nein, das ist wirklich* (Frau Fluth & Frau Reich); *Nun eilt herbei* (Frau Fluth); *Als Bueblein klein* (Falstaff & Chorus); *In einem Waschkorb* (Fluth & Falstaff); *Horch, die Lerche* (Fenton); *Wohl denn, gefasst* (Anna); *O süßes Mond* (Chorus).

Nicolai's charming opera *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is quite popular in Germany and was revived with some success recently by the New York City Opera Company. Two virtually complete recordings exist, and now we have a collection of the most familiar arias and duets, with a chorus thrown in for good measure. Maria Stader has a clear, well-focused voice that is used with intelligence. She is joined by the veteran Margarete Klose in the amusing duet between the two merry wives. Anny Schlemm is less successful in Anne Page's aria. Her tone is somewhat strident and she has some shaky moments. The Swedish bass Kim Borg is excellent in Falstaff's drinking song, which also has choral support, and in the duet with Eberhard Waechter. Walther Ludwig appears briefly singing Fenton's *Romance*.

The recordings date from different sessions, with three different orchestras, all under the direction of Ferdinand Leitner. The sound is uniformly excellent. Complete texts and translations are given. —R.R.

●  
**OFFENBACH IN AMERICA—Orpheus in Hades, The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein, and La belle Hélène Overtures, Intermezzo from The Tales of Hoffman, Galop from Geneviève de Brabant, Selection from La Perichole, Les belles Américaines (waltz, arr. Robert Russell Bennett), and *Musette—Air de ballet*; Samuel Mayes (cello, in the last-listed) and the Boston Pops Orchestra conducted by Arthur Fiedler. RCA Victor LM-1990, \$3.98.**

▲YES, Offenbach came to America—in 1876, for a series of appearances no less successful (but rather less spectacular) than those of Johann Strauss II a few years earlier. This is not, apparently, a copy of any one concert he conducted. Rather, it re-creates the "kind of program", which of course makes for curiosity

as to facts of the matter. Not enough to warrant a trip to the library, to be sure, but it would have been fun to peruse a few actual examples. Fiedler's way with this composer's music is just right, predictably. The whole is by turns melodious and rambunctious. High in listenability, at least until one has finished George R. Marek's charming annotations. Ideally, he should have written enough to keep one diverted for the elapsed time of the recording. Brilliant sound. —J.L.

●  
**OFFENBACH-ROSENTHAL:** *Gaité Parisienne* (complete); Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia KL-5069, \$5.98.

▲YOU might not notice this release in the stores. Columbia has packaged it under the title "The Pleasures of Paris", which alludes directly to an enclosed brochure on same but only vaguely to the musical contents. The asking price is high, and perhaps two dollars for pictures is too much more than the market will bear. Sales figures may prompt a re-issue in standard format; we shall see. Barring that eventually it is somewhat debatable whether or not the Rosenthal-conducted Remington issue should be replaced. Surely it is not in a class with this one as to perfection of performance, nor is it as impressively recorded. But it has style, and at \$1.99 it is more of a bargain than Ormandy's is at \$5.98. The economy factor aside, I am bound to recommend Columbia's version for its sheer sumptuousness. —J.L.

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**RAVEL:** *Ma Mère l'Oye; Rapsodie espagnole; Une Barque sur l'Océan*. Champs-Élysées Théâtre Orchestra conducted by D. E. Inghelbrecht. Ducretet-Thomson DTL-93087, \$4.98.

▲*Ma Mère l'Oye*, originally written for piano duet in 1908, was orchestrated in 1912. Ravel made a ballet of the work, adding a *Prelude* and *Spinning Wheel Dance* which are usually omitted from recorded performances. These two additions are included in Inghelbrecht's recording (as they were in Ansermet's version on London LL-388). The present performance is graceful and polished with superior orchestral sound. The *Rapsodie espagnole* has been recorded many times, but seldom as effectively as here. The colors and rhythms of the score seem hand-tailored for this conductor, so long associated with the music of Debussy and Ravel, he makes the most of them. Again the sound is transparently clear. As a filler, the conductor gives us a fine recorded performance of the orchestral version of the third section of *Miroirs*, dating from 1907. It is an unusually effective piece of mood music, vividly set forth in this recording. —R.R.

●  
**SAINT-SAËNS:** *Symphony No. 3 in C minor*; Henriette Roget (organ) with

the Paris Conservatory Orchestra conducted by André Cluytens. Angel 35336, \$4.98 or \$3.48.

▲THIS recording received, and deserved, a *Grand prix* of the *Académie du disque français*. Those who inclined to the old Munch performance will prefer this latest issue to the Toscanini disc, although the latter will remain unique for its marvelous delineation of the cool classicism that is—or is it?—the inherent essence of the piece. If you lean towards a warmer conception, certainly Cluytens would be the choice. He extracts every last measure of feeling from the score, keeps it moving at the fastest reasonable speed. And for once we are not denied the presence of the two pianos; they are always there but one would never know it from other versions. As indicated, exceptional sound. —J.L.

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**SCARLATTI:** *Sonatas* (Vol. 15)—L. 53 in G; L. 200 in B flat; L. 108 in D minor; L. 95 in A; L. 101 in C; L. 85 in G; L. 94 in A; L. 168 in D minor; L. 83 in G; L. 82 in G; L. 217 in C minor; L. 414 in D; Fernando Valenti (harpsichord). Westminster WN-18170.

▲AS Valenti's recordings of Scarlatti mount up, one truth about this first-rate interpreter becomes increasingly evident: that while carrying out his program of demonstrating the richness and variety of Scarlatti's music, Valenti is also necessarily demonstrating his own powers as a performer. By now, for most listeners, the composer and the harpsichordist go hand in hand, and it is difficult to think of any but the most popular sonatas without hearing it in the terms of Valenti's interpretation. The outstanding characteristic of Valenti's playing is a rhythmic vitality that is, in Vol. 15, most evident in L. 200—a dazzling virtuoso piece—and L. 94, which is one of the four early sonatas included on the disc. L. 101, with its variety of rhythmic patterns and its odd intervals, may perhaps best be described as "witty," while L. 108 is "Romantic" with its "impassioned moments" and a repeated phrase that reminds this listener of Mendelssohn's *Variations sérieuses*. Valenti conveys both the wit and the passion, and for the latter uses a *tempo rubato* that does not seem out of style. The sound is, as usual, full and flawless, without the raucousness that often characterizes harpsichord recordings. —E.Z.

●  
**SCHUBERT:** *Sonata in E; Sonata in F minor*. Friedrich Wuehrer (piano). Vox PL-9800.

▲WUEHRER rounds out his recording of all the Schubert piano sonatas with two seldom heard works; both, in fact, appear here for the first time on disc. The *E major*, published in 1843 as *Five Pieces for Piano*, has a complicated textual

history; and the first movement of the *F minor* was left incomplete in the autograph. Only the latter sonata is first-rate Schubert, the mood of which reminds one of the great *Fantasy for Four Hands* in the same key. The *E major* strikes this listener as dull, but repeated listening might reveal more melodic charm. Unfortunately, the review copy is marred by extremely obtrusive surface noise. Wuehrer plays Schubert solidly, intelligently and rather heavily. Often the lyrical passages are played with too much restraint. However correct Wuehrer's interpretations may be, one might ask for more lyrical abandon from a Schubert specialist. —E.Z.

**SCHUMANN:** *Concerto in A minor, Op. 54*; Walter Gieseking (piano) with the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Herbert Von Karajan; *Kinderszenen, Op. 15*, Walter Gieseking (piano solo). Angel 35321.

▲THE outer movements of the concerto never take wing in this performance, for the phrases are often shortwinded and lack impulse and power. Needless to say, Gieseking's great delicacy is frequently in evidence, especially in the exquisite *Intermezzo*. But even here the performance does not approach the version Lipatti made with the same conductor and orchestra. A comparison of the two recordings demonstrates that, in a concerto like the Schumann, the pianist is in command. While the lack of drive in the Gieseking performance seems to hold the conductor back, the spontaneity, freshness and vigor of Lipatti's playing is matched by the Romantic sweep of Von Karajan and the Philharmonia. This version (Columbia ML-4525) has a youthful energy, and a wealth of sentiment without sentimentality, that makes it hard to beat, even though the Angel disc is sonically superior. On the reverse of the Gieseking disc the pianist plays the *Kinderszenen*, with a simplicity and good taste already familiar through a recording in which the pieces are coupled with Brahms *Intermezzi*. —E.Z.

**SCRIABIN:** *Sonata No. 3 in F sharp minor, Op. 23*; 16 *Preludes*; Vladimir Horowitz (piano). Victor LM-2005.

▲SCRIABIN'S *Third Sonata* has fascinated me for a long time, although until the current recording I had heard only a few amateur performances of it. The influence of Chopin is not so obvious as it is in the *Op. 11 Preludes*, yet it was composed before Scriabin entered the often unreachable realm of super-chromaticism and mystic chords. It is a passionate work, even though its sudden outbursts make it seem rather fragmentary. Horowitz conveys both the passion and the delicate coloring of the lyrical sections, but even his great artistry cannot overcome the impression of fragmentation,

especially in the wild complication of the last movement. To supplement the sonata, Horowitz has chosen 16 of the 85 *Preludes* Scriabin composed; they range from the often startlingly Chopinesque early pieces, some of them only one page long, to the more individual, but less comprehensible, later works. Needless to say, they are played brilliantly and with great understanding of the intent of each piece. Good sound. —E.Z.

**STRAUSS: Richard:** *Der Rosenkavalier—Suite*; **STRAUSS, Johann:** *Tales of the Vienna Woods*; Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of London conducted by Artur Rodzinski. Westminster Laboratory Series W-LAB 7025, \$7.50.

▲BOTH of these scores gain by the clarity and fidelity of the reproduction. The Johann Strauss waltz opens the recording. The performance is both an artful and a "schmalzy" one. Strauss' original scoring with zither is used which endorses this performance for this listener. Rodzinski, who has long been a Richard Strauss' exponent, gives a carefully detailed performance of the *Rosenkavalier* music in which he is unable to disguise the seams in the composer's somewhat hodgepodge arrangement. Too bad that the

*Rosenkavalier* music timed over the ideal length for a Lab recording, for the first three minutes of it have to be placed after the Johann Strauss' waltz. Better this way, one suspects, than extending beyond the limit on a Lab Series disc. And the sound is really something on Side B.

—J.N.

**STRAVINSKY:** *Les Noces*; *Mass*; *Pater Noster*; *Ave Maria*; Netherlands Chamber Choir and instrumentalists conducted by Felix de Nobel. Epic LC-3231, \$3.98.

▲A FINE omnibus disc of Stravinsky's choral works. The famous *Les Noces* gets its best rendering on long-playing records, but even this carefully prepared performance does not make the composition attractive to your reviewer as a listening experience. This music has always seemed to need the visual elements it was intended to support. More rewarding are the religious works. The *Mass*, in particular (obviously inspired by the great choral works of the 15th-century Flemish masters), is beautifully wrought and moving in its austere manner and disciplined expression. The vocalists and instrumentalists under de Nobel's direction are excellent. While their work does not have the power of certain Stravinsky performances, it does have a flowing quality becoming to



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each of the four compositions. Good sound. —C.J.L.

**TCHAIKOWSKY:** *Concerto No. 1 in B flat minor, Op. 23*; Paul Badura-Skoda (piano) with the Philharmonic Promenade Orchestra conducted by Sir Adrian Boult. Westminster XWN-18162, \$3.98.

▲ONCE again extreme care and clarity mark Badura-Skoda's playing, and this has carried through to the orchestral passages, where Sir Adrian and the Philharmonic Promenade play with remarkable transparency and accuracy of detail. This works especially well in the slow movement (the controversial B flat in the opening flute solo is, incidentally, played unaltered) and Badura-Skoda plays the scherzo section with a clarity of phrasing not often heard in these passages. All this, plus fine sound engineering, adds up to one of the very best of the now almost innumerable recordings of this concerto, and it is probably owing to a completely subjective response that I still prefer, among the more recent discs by younger pianists, the extra verve that Katchen and Gamba bring to the work. —E.Z.

**THE TONE POEM:** *Mephisto Waltz* (Liszt); *Don Juan, Op. 20* (Strauss); Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by Fritz Reiner; *Romeo and Juliet* (Tchaikovsky); *Francesca da Rimini, Op. 32* (Tchaikovsky); Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Charles Munch; *Les Préludes* (Liszt); Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Pierre Monteux; *La Valse*; Boston Symphony conducted by Charles Munch; *Italia* (Casella); *El Salon México* (Copland); Boston Pops Orchestra conducted by Arthur Fiedler; **DEBUSSY:** *Nuages from Nocturnes* (Debussy); *Escales* (Ibert); Leopold Stokowski and his Symphony Orchestra. RCA Victor LM-6129, 3 discs \$11.94.

▲THIS album is intended to fulfill two purposes—to have the widest possible appeal and still to survey the tone poem from Liszt's time to our own. Of the 10 works included, however, five are reissues and one—*La Valse*—is a duplication from an all-Ravel disc separately issued this month. The program could have been more imaginatively devised.

Reiner's *Mephisto Waltz* is an improvement on most of the LP versions with the exception of Markevitch's (Angel 35154). His *Don Juan* has its keenest competition from Toscanini. Munch tends to take liberties with romantic sentiment in his traversal of the Tchaikovsky tone poems. Here is another case where handsome reproduction will undoubtedly circumvent critical comment from most. Munch's *La Valse* is commented on elsewhere, and wisely, too. Fiedler, with improved reproduction, does better by Casella's rhapsody than did his German predecessor

Rolf Kleinert, but this is music for conductors who better understand the Italian temperament. His *Salon México* though well played and better sounding, does not equal Bernstein's evaluation on Columbia ML-2203. Stokowski's Debussy and Ibert are rich in coloration if sometimes overripe in effect. Nevertheless, this is handsome music-making. High quality reproduction prevails throughout this set, to which there is one minor drawback—the over-sized, flimsy box that fails to hold the records snugly when closed. Record warp will result in short order if one does not use cardboard to fill up the space. The value of boxing records in place of fitting them in albums remains dubious.

—P.H.R.

**TRAPP FAMILY SINGERS—Farewell Concert**, Dr. Franz Wasner, conductor. Decca DL-9838, \$3.98.

▲OF ALL the records that the Trapp Family has made to date, this one strikes your reporter as a most interesting and engaging program of their somewhat self-effacing art. The recital opens with Morley's *Sing we and chant it*, followed by a piece by Byrd arranged for four recorders. The division of vocal and instrumental selections is one of the happy features of this record, and not the least of aural enjoyment is provided by Dr. Wasner's effectively arranged pieces. Arcandelt's *Il bianco e dolce cigno* is next, then comes more recorder music, followed by three Brahms songs including appropriately the folk song *Abschiedslied*. Two movements from a L'Oeillet sonata for alto recorder and spinet makes a most delightful instrumental interlude. Then comes Bruckner's *Tota pulchra es Maria* to complete side 1. Side 2 has more folk pieces for the singers—including a Maori Folk Song, two Hawaiian and one Australian. The latter *Waltzing Matilda* seems a bit tame, but the others are pleasingly sung. Aloha oe ends the concert, leaving no doubt in the listener's mind that the "Farewell" motive was intended to be retained. Decca engineers have provided the right kind of reproduction for the singers—intimate yet lifelike.

—J.N.

**THE UNABASHED VIRTUOSO:** *Fledermaus Paraphrase* (Strauss-Kovacs); *La Campanella, Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2* (Liszt); 4 others; Stephen Kovács (piano). Elektra LP disc 106, \$5.95.

▲HERE is one for audio demonstration. The disc is among the finest piano recordings your reviewer has head—wide in range, pleasingly balanced, well proportioned in dynamics, rich in color. There is not a good deal of musical nourishment; this type of repertoire is redolent of the delights of the circus. The performer, at present the leader of the American Piano Trio, is a sound and musical workman; but (to mix metaphors)

he is decidedly not the "triple somersault" type. Kovács is certainly up to showing the listener an adequate portion of the capacities of a modern piano, however, and for this record that is enough: the sound's the thing. —C.J.L.

**The Virtuoso Orchestra—Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun (Debussy); *Bolero, Rapsodie espagnole* and *La valse* (Ravel); Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Charles Munch. RCA Victor LM-1984, \$3.98.**

▲THE slick techniques of Madison Avenue "ad" men have come into the once rather dignified record industry. Now it is "The Hi-Fi Orchestra" from Philadelphia, and "The Virtuoso Orchestra" from Boston. Perhaps one day we will read of an "Atomic" Philharmonic? Cognomens notwithstanding, the works performed here are right up Munch's alley. If one is to quibble a bit, his *Faun* is a bit lacking in its inherent sensuousness; a certain matter-of-factness seems to creep in. The *Bolero* just misses; had Munch followed Ravel's instructions as to tempo the performance would have been a bull's eye. The *La Valse* and *Rapsodie espagnole* have been recorded previously by this conductor and orchestra, but the latest results are musically quite different. Not only are the tempi generally slower in the new *La Valse*, and entire sections retarded and given new stress, but Munch's whole concept of the work seems to have changed. There was a consistent relentlessness in his earlier performance. It was indeed a commentary of the hopelessness of the world and its ultimate destruction as seen through an artist's eyes, which was as Ravel intended it. The music went on, faster and faster, till it reached its frantic, insane end. Munch now seems to view the piece as a series of episodes. The *Rapsodie espagnole* is much the same performance as before. If it lacks just a bit of the brilliance and contagious fire of old, it is still a paragon. —A.K.

## REVIEWS IN BRIEF

**BUXTEHUDE:** Complete Organ Works, Vol. IV—*Prelude, Fugue, and Chaconne in C*; *Preludes and Fugues in D, G minor, D minor, G, and E*; Alf Linder (organ). Westminster WN- or SWN-18221. \$4.98 or \$3.98.

▲ONE of Westminster's several major projects—with Valenti's Scarlatti series it is probably the most valuable—continues to astonish us with a wealth of new and wonderful music. As before, the performances are exemplary and the recorded sound is all that could be desired. One sincerely hopes that listeners predisposed to the organ will investigate Linder's discs, of which this is only the fourth of many. Bach himself once walked many miles to hear Buxtehude play. The resulting influences on his own style are not to be gainsaid. —J.N.

**The Cadet Chapel Organ:** *Toccata and Fugue in D minor, Prelude and Fugue in A minor, Passa-*



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## BRIEF

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*caglia* and *Fugue in C minor*, and *Chorale Prelude, Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland* (Bach); Claire Coci (organ). Vox set DL-210, \$12.95.

▲THIS is the first appearance on records of the controversial instrument at West Point. It is also, by the way, Miss Coci's LP debut. She plays these standard works with commendable straightforwardness, choosing her registrations carefully. The organ itself is a wonder—not that it is right for Bach. This release is not meant for purist ears, however. It seems to have been designed as a demonstration of the instrument's capabilities. What better than the most familiar masterpieces for such an assignment. West Point grads and hi-fi extremists cannot but be interested in the results, and undoubtedly some organists also. Vox has gone all out to capture the likeness of the mighty monster in its own den—which can be your living room, if your equipment can take it.—J.N.

●  
**DUKAS:** *La Peri*; *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*; **SAINT-SAENS:** *Omphale's Spinning Wheel*; Orchestra of the Paris Opera conducted by Robert Benedetti. Capitol P-18008, \$3.98.

▲COMPATIBLE enough disc-mates, and quite good performances. It is still possible to recommend Ansermet and Toscanini, respectively, in the Dukas works, and those who like the Saint-Saens doubtless will prefer the Angel disc that includes three other of his symphonic poems. —J.N.

●  
**FIESTA!**—*Aragonesa* from *Le Cid* (Massenet), *Chanson bohemienne* from *Carmen* (Bizet), *La Paloma* (Yradier), *Jota Aragonesa* (Glinka), *La Virgen de la Macarena* (Monterde), *Las Chiapanecas* (trad.), *The Maids of Cadiz* (Delibes), *Andalus* (Granados), *Jamaican Rumba* (Benjamin), *La Golondrina* (Serradell), and *Granada* (Lara); Hollywood Bowl Symphony Orchestra conducted by Carmen Dragon. Capitol P-8335, \$3.98.

▲HIGH-CLASS Muzak fare, classification Latin. The performances are slick as can be, the recordings full of bright clangor. —J.L.

●  
**FRANCK:** *Grande piece symphonique*, Op. 17; *Final*, Op. 21; *Priere*, Op. 20; Jean Langlais (organ). Ducretet-Thomson DTL-93071, \$4.98.

▲IT was at the same Paris instrument played by M. Langlais that Franck composed these works nearly a century ago—the organ in La Basilique, Sainte Clotilde. The *Opp. 16-21* collectively comprise the *Six pieces*, so that the half-measure here-with presumably will be supplemented by a second disc in due course. One hopes so, for these performances are eloquently meditative and, when appropriate, joyfully fervent. Good sound; perhaps a bit too true to the venue for the hi-fi perfectionist. —J.L.

●  
**LOURDES, A DAY OF PILGRIMAGE:** Extracts from *Pontifical Mass*, etc. Ducretet-Thomson DTL 93052, \$4.98.

▲HERE is a souvenir record for those who have made the pilgrimage to Lourdes, and for those who would like to do so. Naturally it preserves only a few of the outstanding moments in the day, but they come to us with the utmost realism, for this is an on the spot recording; nothing is rehearsed. At first mood and atmosphere are set by the voices of birds and the sound of bells; then we hear the surge of the crowd with its rumble of voices, the usual coughs and throat clearings. In the course of the pilgrimage there are prayers, exhortations, portions of the Mass, some singing in which the worshippers join. All in all, a vivid presentation of a very special religious ceremony. —P.L.M.

●  
**MOZART:** *Divertimenti*, K. 136-8; *Serenata Notturmo*, K. 239; Solisti di Zagreb conducted by Antonio Janigro. Vanguard VRS-482, \$4.98.

▲LOVING performances all, and superbly recorded. The legend hath it that all pianists and fiddlers are frustrated conductors, and here is further evidence that cellists, also, aspire to the

podium. Remember that Toscanini and Wallenstein and doubtless other conductors began their careers at a cello desk. If the gifted Janigro has hopes of emulating them, he has at least made a fine start with this demonstration. The interpretations are sunny and in all respects Mozartean. If you insist on having the K. 136-8 in their original string quartet settings, of course, there is only one other label to turn to—by an odd twist, the very label on which Janigro appears in his more familiar role. —J.N.

●  
**NIGHTS AT THE BALLET—Vol. I:** *Casse-noisette* (suite), *The Blue Bird*, and *The Black Swan* (Tchaikovsky); *Don Quichotte* (Minkus); Orchestra of the Concerts Colonne conducted by Daniel Stirn. Ducretet-Thomson DTL-93019, \$4.98.

▲WERE it not for the promise implied by that "Vol. I", this disc could go without comment. Certainly there are better performances of the abridged *Nutcracker*, and the other two Tchaikovsky items are of course mere snippets from *Sleeping Beauty* and *Swan Lake*, respectively. The Minkus is more desirably available on a 10" London disc with *Spectre de la Rose* (Weber's *Invitation to the Dance*). True, the Tchaikovsky excerpts are seen and heard more often than their full-length contexts, but that is little reason for lending this validation to the custom. The recorded sound is good, the playing on the whole rather too redolent of a pit orchestra's. But I salute the sponsors of the idea with a hope and a prayer that subsequent releases will show an improvement. Heaven knows the literature of ballet music can provide dozens of sequels. Capitol and Vox started to cover the ground systematically and then lost their initial enthusiasm. Perhaps Ducretet-Thomson will stay with its project. —J.L.

●  
**RIMSKY-KORSAKOV:** *Fantasy on Russian Themes*, Op. 33; *Sea Episode* from *Sadko*; **BALAKIREV:** *Russia—Symphonic Poem*; Marina Kozolupova (violin, in the Op. 33) with the State Radio Orchestra conducted by Nikolai Anosov and (in the other works) the State Orchestra of the U. S. S. R. conducted by Konstantine Ivanov. Westminster XWN-18120, \$3.98.

▲THE Balakirev work is more effectively performed and recorded on the Angel disc given over entirely to this composer's orchestral music. The couplings here, however, are not available elsewhere, and both of them are worth knowing. Rimsky could do wondrous things with a few folk melodies, as witness the *Op. 33*; granted that this piece is a lesser achievement than the *Capriccio Espagnol* that adjoins it in his catalogue. Those who own the complete *Sadko*, of course, will want to avoid this duplication. The sound is acceptable, but not much more so. —J.N.

●  
**RIMSKY-KORSAKOV:** *Scheherazade*; Miriam Solovieff (violin) with the Vienna State Opera

Orchestra conducted by Mario Ross. Vanguard Demonstration Record SRV-103, \$1.98.

▲ONE pities the unsuspecting layman who believes all of the promotional bunk to be found on record jacket fronts. We are told that this disc offers "not excerpts" (would that it did) "but a complete performance, by one of the world's great orchestras, led by a master conductor. . ." Not only does the "master" conductor in this case evidence no imagination, so that the performance is utterly colorless, but had he taken the trouble to examine the composer's distinct directions as to tempi, dynamics, phrasing, and accents, he couldn't have gone as wrong as he does. The recorded sound, however, is good. There is no dearth of *Scheherazade* recordings, fortunately, but just one more this reporter would like to see, and that is a new Monteux version. —A.K.

●  
**RUFFLES AND FLOURISHES:** Members of the Eastman Symphonic Wind Ensemble conducted by Frederick Fennell. Mercury MG-50112, \$3.98.

**MUSIC FOR FIFE AND DRUMS:** same artists. Mercury MG-50111, \$3.98.

▲MILITARY music—the real article, I mean—is hard to come by on LP. There are marches in abundance, but that isn't the same thing. Of these beautifully recorded discs, the first is devoted to pieces for field trumpets and drums—traditional marches, inspection pieces, music for rendering honors, miscellaneous bugle calls, and drum solos—ending with the national anthem. The second, as indicated, is given over to traditional marching tunes and other music for fives and drums, including camp duty pieces and more drum solos. The latter collection is subtitled "The Spirit of '76", but both are historical insofar as they attempt to survey the field music of the United States armed forces from the Revolutionary War to the present. Fennell's instruments are absolutely first class. Assuming the research was all that it should have been, these documentaries represent an invaluable contribution to recorded Americana. —J.L.

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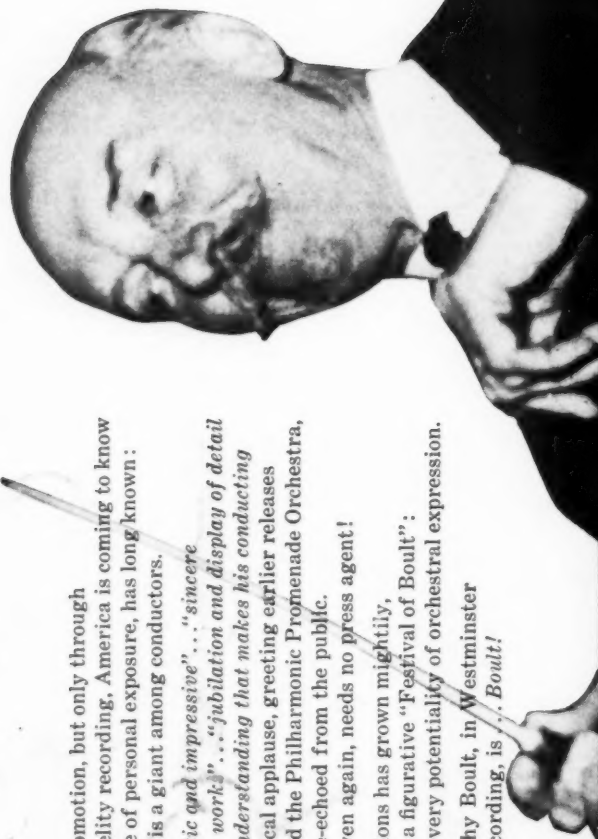
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